DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 140 156 CG 011 434

AUTHOR Giordano, Peggy C.
TITLE Changing Sex Roles and Females' Involvement in Delinquency.
PUB DATE Apr 76
NOTE 28p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Midwestern Sociological Society (St. Louis, Missouri, April 21-24, 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescents; *Crime; *Delinquency; *Females; High School Students; Literature Reviews; Lower Class; Peer Groups; *Sex Role; Sex Stereotypes; *Social Attitudes

ABSTRACT

This paper provides an indepth review of the literature dealing with females' involvement in delinquency and examines some of the widely held assumptions and their implications. Additionally, it sets out to assess the nature of changes in sex role attitudes or behavior which may be accounting for increased involvement by females in criminal activity. Subjects were 108 girls at a state institution for juvenile offenders and 83 girls randomly selected from an urban high school in a predominantly lower status area. Age range was 12-19. Questionnaires were administered to both groups to see if girls were involved primarily with status offenses, incorrigibility, etc., as depicted in the literature, or whether there were girls who had gotten involved in crimes generally considered "masculine." Results indicate that while most of the girls in the institution had commited many of the "traditional" female offenses, there was evidence of significant involvement in more serious crimes as well. (Author/YRJ)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED140156

CHANGING SEX ROLES AND FEMALES' INVOLVEMENT IN DELINQUENCY

Peggy C. Giordano

Bowling Green State University

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

CG011434

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Sociological Society, April, 1976, St. Louis, Missouri.

CHANGING SEX ROLES AND FEMALES' INVOLVEMENT IN DELINQUENCY

The (until recently) widely held assumption that delinquency was mostly masculine in gender has had important implications both for the kind of theoretical work which has dominated the delinquency literature, as well as in the continued choice of males as preferred subjects for empirical research.

Psychological or "personal problems" explanations have generally been marshalled to explain the delinquency that has occurred among females. It has also been assumed that sexual offenses, incorrigibility, and running away make up the delinquent repertoire of these girls, and that their involvement in more serious offenses is quite limited.

The psychological or personal problems explanations have taken many forms, but generally conceive of female delinquency as a "perversion of rebellion against their natural feminine roles" (Klein, 1973:5). This ranges from the early physiological studies, which focused on the supposedly more masculine characteristics of the female criminal (such as excess body hair) than her non-criminal counterpart, to Freud's well known discussion of penis envy.

Even where sociological variables have been studied they are generally interpreted psychologically. For example, while it is widely recognized that a "bad home life" or coming from a broken home is related to a higher incidence of delinquency generally, this variable is thought to be even more problematic in the case of girls (Gilbert, 1972; Reige, 1972;

Pollack and Friedman, 1969; Cowie et al., 1968; Konopka, 1966; Morris, 1964; Barker and Adams, 1962). Barker and Adams propose that many of the females' delinquent acts are psychological reaction formations against absent or inadequate fathers. Konopka's impressionistic data link a poor home life with a deep sense of loneliness and low self-esteem. Riege (1972) empirically examined some of these same variables and found that delinquent girls felt that their parents did not give them equal love and that they would be embarrassed to openly express affection toward their fathers.

Several studies have attempted to link actual psychological abnormalities with delinquency in girls. Cowie et al. (1968) found severe psychiatric abnormalities in many of the 322 institutionalized girls in their study. Payak (1963) contended that poor self-concepts, feelings of dependency and insecurity, as well as emotional selfishness characterize their sample of female offenders. However, Heckell and Mandell (1970) found that the incidence of emotional disorders was not greater in their sample than in the general population.

Another set of studies includes more clearly social variables, but nevertheless perpetuates the conception of female delinquency as primarily an adaptation to personal problems. This group of studies deals with the theory, as first suggested by Cohen (1955), that delinquency in females may be associated with girls' inability to establish a good relationship with the opposite sex. Whereas for males, long range goals center around achieving success and acquiring material possessions, the primary goal for females is thought to be "catching a man." Thus, the classic Mertonian model, if somewhat stripped of its structural components, can then be applied to understanding female delinquency as a form of "innovation."

Indeed Rittenhouse (1963) in a comparison of the delinquency of boys and girls, found "relational strivings" to be more characteristic of girls, where boys more often experience "status striving" and "material deprivations." Sandhu and Allen (1969) offer an explicit test of this theory, but found that their delinquent sample actually perceived fewer obstacles to marital goals than the control group. Morris (1964) found that delinquents reported more dates than the non-delinquent sample. (The author suggested that perhaps there is a difference in the "quality" of the dates they are able to obtain or in the sexual favors they may have to "bestow" to be able to get the dates, however). Morris also compared differences in observers' ratings of facial features, figure, and grooming between delinquents and non-delinquents but found significant differences only in terms of grooming. The importance of this finding, too, is tempered somewhat when one considers that the inferior degree of cleanliness and neatness reported may be simply a reflection of middle class interviewer standards and have little to do with the criteria by which boys and girls judge each other as acceptable dating partners.

The bulk of the literature, then, has perpetuated the notion that personal maladjustments characterize the female delinquent; she either must have a psychological problem, be unable to adequately perform her proper sex role, or suffer from the ill effects of a bad home life. The recent large increases in the number of adjudicated females as well as the apparent increased versatility of their involvement in crimes, makes it more difficult to account for all female crime in such purely psychological terms. For example, between 1960 and 1973 the arrest rate of females under 18 years of age increased 265 percent for all offenses, 393 percent for violent crimes, and 334 percent for property crimes. This

contrasts with increases of 124 percent, 236 percent, and 82 percent respectively for males in the same age bracket (FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 1973; Table 28).

A ready explanation for understanding females' involvement and, in particular, these fast rising official delinquency statistics is provided by "women's liberation." Freda Adler's Sisters in Crime is one such work which generally adopts a feminist stance in interpreting such rising statistics. While her position is not always consistent, the overall image is that the movement is directly responsible for precipitating such increases, but that this is one of the prices society must pay for sexual equality. As Adler stated in an interview, "They're (the "new" female criminal) fighting not only for urban social change but also for sexual equality along with other women" (Newsweek, 1975). While she does not suggest that women and girls who have become involved in criminal activity are necessarily aligned with "the movement" itself, the causal connection is nevertheless quite direct. For example, she suggests that women who used to be satisfied with petty kinds of theft are asking why they shouldn't get a bigger piece of the pie -- i.e., "If I can steal radios, why not T.V.'s?" This kind of motivation is seen as primarily financial rather than ideological, but the feminist perspective is definitely in evidence throughout the book. The title, Sisters in Crime, is not accidentally chosen. "Like her legitimate based sister, the female criminal knows too much to pretend or return to her former role as a second rate criminal confined to feminine crimes such as shoplifting and prostitution. She has had a taste of financial victory. In some cases, she has had a taste of blood. Her appetite, however, appears to be only whetted" (1975:15). One of the manifestations of this is that according to Adler, females are

becoming more goal oriented, experiencing pressure to "prove themselves," and that this has resulted in intense role conflicts.

Another indication of the feminist perspective taken by Adler involves her contention that such activities as student protest in the 1960's, where females were seen as equals, arrested in large numbers and the like, has had some affect on girls' delinquency (by making them more independent, etc.). These assertions, as well as those which link liberation with a "new" style of female criminal seem to contradict all that is known about the impact of social movements on various segments of society (Keniston, 1969; Haan, Smith and Block, 1968; Flacks, 1967). While most of the youths who became protest leaders were from middle class backgrounds, the adolescents who currently make up the arrest statistics are largely lower class; hence, this explanation sheds little light on the social processes which may be accounting for such increases.

A somewhat less sensational explanation is offered by Simon, in an analysis of current adult arrest statistics. She found the largest percentage increases for females in such crimes as larceny, fraud, embezzlement, and forgery. She attributed this in large part to the increase in the number of women who are holding white collar positions, and thus now simply have the opportunity to commit such offenses. In a similar vein, McCollum (1975:5), in a review of Adler's book, suggests that the fact that women are the earliest and hardest hit by economic depressions may be more important than any ideological "liberation."

While such factors may explain increases in the official arrest statistics for adult females, their relevance in the case of adolescent girls is not as clear, since these girls have yet to enter the labor force.

It is generally agreed that SOMETHING about "changing sex roles" may be causing increased involvement in crimes for females (exception is taken by Faustini, 1969, who analyzed the nature of female juvenile delinquency in Italy and hypothesized that the emancipation of women in Italy has resulted in a decline in female crimes, particularly in the case of serious offenses). There is very little agreement or empirical evidence which suggests how this process is occurring, however. It is suggested here that we need to examine the ways in which broader societal changes filter down to the point where they affect adolescent girls, and to see what aspects of the everyday social world of juvenile girls seem to promote deviant activity. The present paper suggests three related areas of change which may be accounting for increased delinquent activity by females: (a) increased situational opportunity, (b) changing friendship patterns, and (c) a loosening of the norms which in the past severely proscribed female adolescents' behavior. Empirical findings are presented which concern the latter two sets of factors.

(a) Situational Opportunities

One of the central tenets of theories of male delinquency is that opportunities to engage in illegal activities (as well as legitimate opportunities) are not evenly distributed across the population. We would apply this notion to an understanding of females' traditionally low level of involvement in deviance as well as the recent increases in their delinquency rates. There has classically existed, even within the same family, more protection, restriction of the behavior of young girls than is the case for boys. This has included more attention by all societal institutions -- the school, family, church -- to guiding the moral and social life of the adolescent female, while the boy is expected, even encouraged,

to sew a few wild oats. This double standard is exemplified in a greater likelihood of a curfew for young girls, more restrictions being placed on who she might date, where she could go, and so on. Therefore, recent societal changes which have relaxed the rather universal protection, sheltering of females, may simply have created new opportunities for them to engage in many kinds of activities, some of which will exceed legal boundaries. Such an approach would even allow for a re-interpretation of the findings noted above with regard to the important relationship between broken homes and female delinquency. The lack of a united two parent front to enforce rules, watch over the daughter, which was part of the classic protective pattern (Parsons, 1942), may result not necessarily in deep emotional problems but simply in greater freedom, opportunities to commit delinquent acts. Slocum and Stone (1963), for example, found that those students whose parents allowed them every evening out were more likely to be classified as delinquent types and that his delinquent "types" were not as likely to come home directly after school as his "conformist category." It is interesting that while Adler recognized the fact that the weakening of the protective environment of the family has indeed had an influence on adolescent girls, she again chooses to cast her argument within a feminist perspective. She suggests that the growing "role convergence between the sexes has resulted in the acceptability and even the necessity of girls becoming more self-sufficient, or as she put it "to the necessity, once exclusively male, to make one's way and to prove oneself to the world" (1975:94). Here Adler seems almost to harken back to the traditional theoretical treatments of females in her further assertion that such attempts may cause such conflict and ambiguity as to create "complex identity problems more intense in nature and scope than those

faced by boys." Again, however, there is no empirical evidence which links this new goal orientation (if indeed it exists) to delinquent activity on the part of girls.

(b) Friendship Patterns

The classic delinquency literature has also emphasized the masculine character of the "subcultures" or peer networks which exert such a significant influence on adolescent boys. The assumption is that such friendship patterns do not exist, or are not very important in the lives of adolescent girls; this is given as a further explanation for the infrequent involvement of females in delinquent activity. It is suggested here that this may have always been a somewhat inaccurate view of the social world of adolescent girls, and that the variable of friendships must assume a central role in any attempt to understand the more recent increases in their involvement in delinquent activity.

It is interesting that if we examine the more general literature on adolescence there is a great deal of evidence which points to the importance of the peer group for females as well as males, and even suggests that such female friendship networks may promote delinquent activity. For example, Coleman's (1965) research documents the proliferation of complicated cliques or gangs within the youth culture. These are thought to be even more tightly-knit and complex in the case of girls than boys. While Coleman did not research the area of criminal activity, he did report cliques or gangs of girls who were known to be "fast" or "tough" -- girls who reported smoking, drinking, or "hanging around the skating rink." Other researchers, for example, Suttles (1968) concentrate on the gang activities of males but provide impressionistic evidence of much autonomous peer activity on the part of the girls as well.

(c) Changes in Perceptions of Acceptable Behavior for Females: Or, What is "Cool" Behavior for Females may Have Changed.

Related both to increased situational opportunities and to the importance of friendship networks in understanding female delinquent activity, is the notion that definitions of what is "permissible" and even "cool" or status enhancing behavior for females may be undergoing some change. It is hypothesized that these changing definitions -- which allow a wider range of activity for girls than simply sitting at home, waiting for a date -- themselves can create a context in which delinquency by girls is a viable option. It is hypothesized that at the very least the more delinquent/aggressive girls are receiving some kind of reference group support from other females, and possibly from other reference groups as well. (Where in the past girls may have curtailed their behavior because of concern over "What boys would think of them," or because "their boyfriend would disapprove.") The present paper presents the results of a study which empirically examines first the notion that there is a direct link between attitudinal or ideological "liberation" and levels of delinquent involvement, and alternatively, looks at the more immediate, everyday ways in which broader sex role changes may be influencing the lives of adolescent girls in ways that result in deviant outcomes.

Methodology

In order to most accurately assess the nature of changes in sex role attitudes or behavior which may be accounting for increased involvement by females in criminal activity, a longitudinal design would be ideal. However, as indicated above, the number of early studies of the female delinquent are quite limited, and where females have been researched, the items included tend to be psychological. Given this lack of an early

comparison group, it is nevertheless possible, using a cross-sectional sample, to determine whether certain sex-role related attitudes and behaviors are associated with girls who evidence higher levels of delinquent involvement. In order to accomplish this, questionnaires were administered to 108 girls (the total population) at a state institution for juvenile offenders, as well as to a comparable sample of 83 girls randomly selected from an urban high school in a predominantly lower status area. The high school sample was added to provide a wider range of delinquent involvement -- primarily to increase the number who are more "law-abiding." The age range for the institutionalized sample was 12-19, with a mean age of 17, while the range for the school sample was 14-19, with a mean age of 17.3. The percent non-white was 50.9 for the institutionalized sample, while the school sample was 48.2 percent non-white. One of the important limitations of the sample is that the girls come from lower socioeconomic status backgrounds (as indicated by the occupations they list for their parents/guardians) and hence, the findings to be reported cannot be generalized beyond this lower class sample.

I. A revised version of the Nye-Short (1957) self-admitted delinquency test was used to measure the extent of girls' involvement in delinquent activity. A split-half test for reliability yielded a coefficient of .95 for this scale. II. In order to test whether there was indeed a direct association between "liberated" sex role attitudes and delinquency, a revised version of a scale used by Mason-Bumpass (1975) was employed. This instrument was originally given to a national probability sample of ever-married women under 45. The original scale consists of 17 items dealing with different aspects of "sex role organization and sex differences" (1975:1212). Respondents indicated the extent of their

agreement or disagreement with the items which concerned a wide variety of sex-role related issues. As described by Mason and Bumpass, the scale includes items dealing with "the desirability of the traditional sex-based division of social responsibilities; women caring for the home, men for the world; the rights of women workers; the consequences of maternal employment for the well-being of children; various stereotypes about women and the conditions under which they are happiest and can best function" (1975:1213). It is felt that this scale represents an ideological dimension -- a kind of overall "traditionality"or liberality of attitudes toward sex-role related issues.[1]

III. Several simple items derived from the literature concerning male friendship networks and gangs were used in this study to measure the extent of peer group involvement. Two items were identical to the friendship

---

[1]The specific items included are:

1. "A woman should not let bearing and rearing children stand in the way of a career if she wants it."
2. "Men should share the work around the house with women such as doing dishes, cleaning, and so forth."
3. "Men and women should be paid the same money if they do the same work."
4. "A woman should have exactly the same job opportunities as a man."
5. "There should be free childcare centers so that women could take jobs."
6. "A woman's job should be kept for her when she is having a baby."
7. "If anything happened to one of the children while the mother was working, she could never forgive herself."
8. "A preschool child is likely to suffer if his mother works."
9. "Women are much happier if they stay at home and take care of their children."
10. "A man can make long-range plans for his life, but a woman has to take things as they come."
11. "Sex seems to exist mainly for the man's pleasure."
12. "Many of those in women's rights organizations today seem to be unhappy misfits."
13. "Even if his wife works, the husband should be the major provider for the family."
14. "I believe that fathers should spend as much time in childrearing as mothers."

Items 13 and 14 were added to the original scale. All item-to-total correlations are .40 or higher, except item 11, which was dropped from the scale for the present analysis.

questions used by Lerman (1967) ("When you are at home, who do you usually go around with?" -- Myself, one or two others, or a regular group; and "How much of your leisure time do you spend with friends?" -- All, most, or some). Several other single item indicators, which were more descriptive, were also included.

IV. In order to determine whether changing definitions of what is "acceptable" behavior for females may be accounting for some increases in criminal activity, a series of questions were constructed concerning three reference groups that might be important to the girls. They were asked to indicate how various reference groups would react if they were to engage in certain kinds of activity. "Guys I run around with," "My boyfriend," and "Girls I run around with," were the three reference groups chosen, realizing that there might be other important reference groups, such as parents. The various behaviors were chosen to represent independent kinds of actions, some of which might encourage delinquent activity (e.g., "Staying out all night"), and others which were actually illegal (e.g., "Using grass once in a while"). The items were chosen that dealt with behaviors that may have traditionally been proscribed for females but that it is hypothesized, may be considered more acceptable or even "cool" by today's adolescent subculture. The questions were worded so that there would not be universal disapproval; for example, it is possible to envision approval for one of the items, "Beating up somebody nobody likes," as opposed to something like, "Murdering someone in cold blood." The specific items included were:

Beating up on somebody nobody likes.
Shoplifting.
Running away.
Staying out all night.
Stealing a car for a joy ride.
Making an obscene phone call.

Using a fake I.D. to get in a bar.
Tearing up school property.
Driving around with a bunch of kids.
Using grass once in a while.
Picking up guys.

Total "approval" scores for each reference group were obtained by summing the response for all eleven items. The split-half reliability coefficient for these items using, "Guys I hang around with," as the reference group was .93, for girlfriends, .93, for boyfriends, .94.

Results

It should perhaps first be noted that the sample of 108 incarcerated girls did produce a wide range of delinquent activities. One of the initial reasons for administering the questionnaire was to see if indeed girls were primarily involved with status offenses, incorrigibility, etc., as depicted in the literature, or whether there were girls who had gotten involved in crimes gererally considered "masculine." While most of the girls in the institution had, in fact, committed many of the "traditional" female offenses (e.g., 84.2 percent had run away from home one or more times, 65 percent had had sexual relations with someone they didn't know too well, and 99.1 percent had had sexual relations with someone they loved), there was evidence of significant involvement in more serious crimes as well. Table 1 lists the percentage of the sample of 108 girls who had been involved in crimes which have traditionally been considered "masculine" in character, as well as the involvement by girls in the school sample in these crimes.

Table 1. Percent of Institutionalized and School Samples Reporting Involvement (One or More Times) in "Serious Delinquent Acts"

	Institutionalized Sample (N = 108)		School Sample (N = 83)	
	N	%	N	%
Stealing items over $50	85	78.3	3	3.6
Taken part in gang fights	60	55.6	15	18.1
Carried a weapon, such as a gun or knife	86	79.6	22	26.4
Fought someone using a weapon	64	59.3	6	7.2
Breaking and entering	68	63.5	3	3.6
Used pills to get high	95	83.3	27	32.5
Tried heroine	47	43.5	1	1.2

In addition, 53.7 percent of the institutionalized group indicated that they had been part of a group of girls that could be called a "gang." Of these girls who indicated participation in a gang, 51.9 percent indicated that the gang had a name. The names of these gangs (e.g., The Outlaws, the Cobras, Mojos, Loveless, Red Blood, White Knights, East Side Birds, Power) do not themselves conjure up a particularly feminine image, or even suggest a subordinate position as a "sister" or subordinate wing of a male gang.

Sex-Role Attitudes and Delinquent Involvement

It is first necessary to determine whether, as suggested by Adler and others, there is a direct association between sex-role attitudes and

delinquent involvement. Adler's work would lead us to hypothesize that there would be a positive correlation between liberality of sex-role ideology and delinquent involvement; our prediction is that no such relationship would be found. In examining this relationship, as well as others discussed below, there are important racial differences; hence, all the findings are reported separately for blacks and whites.

Contrary to our hypothesis, there was indeed a significant correlation between liberality of sex role attitudes and extent of delinquent involvement ($r=.28$, $\alpha < .01$)[2] for the whites in this sample. However, a slight negative correlation ($r=-.07$) between liberation and delinquency for the black subsample, although this was not significant.[3] The Nye-Short scale contains many items which deal with minor delinquent acts -- incorrigibility, running away, and the like. Therefore, a separate scale score was constructed which represented the extent of girls' involvement in the more serious activities listed in Table 1. The resulting correlation with liberality of sex role ideology resulted in coefficients of $r=.23$ ($\alpha < .01$) for whites, and $r=-.08$ for blacks. This indicates that the white girls who were involved in serious delinquent acts were more liberated ideologically than the less delinquent white girls.

Another single item, "How important is it to you to get married when you are older?" can be taken as an additional indicator of sex-role

---

[2]We recognize the inherent problem of applying a test of significance to an essentially non-random sample, however, significance levels are reported for interpretive and heuristic value.

[3]In order to determine whether combining the school and institutionalized samples had an effect on this association, separate correlations were also computed for the two samples. Using the school sample only, a Pearson correlation coefficient for "liberation" with extent of delinquent involvement was .27 for whites ($\alpha < .05$); using the institutional sample, $r=.37$ ($\alpha < .01$). There was again no significant correlation for blacks in either the school or institutional sample ($r=-.08$, $r=.07$).

traditionality. A negative correlation between the importance of marriage and extent of delinquent involvement was found for whites ($r=-.26, \alpha < .01$), however, there was no significant correlation for the black subsample ($r=.08$). That is, among the white girls, the more delinquent girls attached less importance to marriage than their less delinquent counterparts.

This finding, as well as the positive relationship found between liberality of sex-roles and delinquency lends some support for the idea of a direct association between a liberated sex-role ideology and involvement in deviance for whites, but not for blacks. However, three factors should be taken into account in interpreting these findings: (a) First, it is obvious that while a statistical association was found between the two sets of variables, this does not necessarily indicate that some sort of liberation-in-attitudes "caused" the delinquency. There is also the possibility that such attitudes are related to a third factor or set of factors which is more important in determining levels of delinquent involvement. It should be noted, however, that of the variables included in the present study, none of the traditionally important variables correlated significantly with liberation (age, coming from a broken home, items dealing with group affiliation, and the like). This does not, of course, preclude the possibility that other variables not included in the study are accounting for this association. It is also possible that these liberated attitudes developed subsequent to or out of the experience of the delinquency itself. (b) Second, the association only indicates that the more delinquent white girls appear to have more liberated attitudes relative to the less delinquent white girls in this lower class sample. By other standards, for example, compared to some feminist ideal, or even

to a middle class group, they might appear quite traditional. (c) Third, it is our contention that the scores on the Mason-Bumpass scale represent but one kind of attitudinal dimension, and one which is fairly removed from the everyday lives of teen-age girls at that. The scale was chosen for inclusion in the present study because the items appear to measure aspects of sex-role ideology which are generally associated with the "women's movement," however, like the movement itself, the scale largely taps adult concerns -- participation in the labor force, feelings about working mothers, and the like. Therefore, it is also necessary to examine the more immediate social world of adolescent girls, where there may be other indices of "liberation."

Friendships and Delinquency

The first item which dealt with friendship patterns, "Who do you usually go around with?" had three possible responses -- myself, one or two others, or a regular group. An analysis of variance was computed which indicated a statistically significant difference between groups -- Those who were part of a regular group were more likely to be delinquent. For the white subsample, $F=11.65$ ($\alpha < .001$); for the black subsample, $F=4.62$ ($\alpha < .01$). The second item concerned the amount of leisure time spent with the group. A significant positive correlation was found between this variable and extent of involvement in delinquency ($r=.43, \alpha < .001$ for whites; $r=.22, \alpha < .01$ for blacks). That is, the more leisure time spent in the group, the more likely a girl was to be delinquent. Similarly, those who indicated that they had ever been part of a group of girls that could be called a "gang" were more delinquent than those who said they had not been part of such a group ($t=5.73, \alpha < .001$ for whites; $t=3.32, \alpha < .001$ for blacks).

Changing Definition of What is "Acceptable" Behavior for Adolescent Girls

Table 2 presents the composite approval scores (degree of approval-disapproval the girl thought she would receive from various reference groups if she were to engage in certain behaviors). A comparison of the mean scores for each of the reference groups shows that the girls perceived more approval from other girlfriends for engaging in these activities than from "guys they hang around with," and that they perceive the least amount of approval from "their boyfriend." It is important to note that the white subsample perceived fairly large differences between the amount of approval they would receive from girls and that from other guys, and particularly, their boyfriend, while the composite scores were not all that

Table 2. Reference Group Support for Delinquency and Its Relationship to Actual Self-Reported Involvement (N = 191)

	Mean Approval	Association With Delinquent Activity		Mean Approval	Association With Delinquent Activity	
	White	r	α	Blacks	r	α
Girls I hang around with	29.38	.33	.001	27.00	.29	.01
Guys I hang around with	26.97	.01	.42	26.15	.24	.01
Boyfriend	22.74	.02	.43	24.74	.18	.05

different for blacks. This suggests that the black girls in this sample did not sharply differentiate between how male and female friends would view their behavior. This may represent another dimension of sex role traditionality/liberality; at this level it is the white girls who appear more traditional -- in thinking that male friends and especially boyfriends would be relatively more disapproving of many of these actions than would

their girlfriends. The picture is complicated somewhat when we examine the correlation coefficients between these composite scores and reported delinquency. There is a positive correlation between approval from other girlfriends and actual delinquent involvement for both the black and white subsamples. There is also a significant correlation between approval from boyfriends or other males and extent of delinquent involvement for blacks but not for whites. (The latter finding, with respect to the white sample, indicates that the approval from boys is not very important in determining delinquency. One could argue that this actually represents a more 'liberated' attitude -- that while they see boys as being more disapproving they simply discount their opinions.)

Context in Which Delinquent Acts Occur

Several other items were included in the questionnaire which deal with the social context in which delinquent acts occur; however, they may be looked at as another kind of measure of sex-role traditionality as well. For example, respondents were asked to indicate whether they were more likely to go out in a group of "guys and girls" or with just girls. For the whites, those who indicated they were more likely to go out in a group of guys and girls were significantly more delinquent than those who said they went out more often with girls only ($t=2.40, \alpha < .05$). However, this did not appear to differentiate delinquents from nondelinquents for blacks.

Additionally, subjects were asked, "When you are out in a group, who would be more likely to start the trouble -- a guy or a girl?" While, as expected, most indicated that it would be a male, only 17.6 percent of the white girls thought a girl might start the trouble, where 31.6 percent of

the black girls thought it might be a girl who would be the one to start the trouble.

Similarly, Table 3 presents the distribution of responses to an item which asked subjects, "Who they are more likely to be with when they get into trouble." For the whites, a higher percentage indicated they would be with a group of guys or "guys and girls"; for the black subsample, a higher percentage thought they would be likely to get into trouble when they were with girls.

A final item, "If you had your choice, would you rather go out with a group of girls or a guy you were not too crazy about?" also produced interesting results. It was hypothesized that the "traditional" teen-age code would suggest the preferability of going out on a date to going out with the girls, but that this standard might be changing. For the whites in this subgroup, those who indicated (in the more traditional vein) that they would "rather go out with a guy" were more likely to be delinquent than those who would prefer to go out with the girls ($t=3.54, \alpha < .001$). This relationship was not found in the case of blacks (t=1.55,N.S.).

Table 3. The Social Context in Which "Trouble" is Likely to Occur

	Whites (N=91)*		Blacks (N=95)*	
	N	%	N	%
Group of girls	17	18.7	33	34.7
A group of guys and girls	25	27.5	21	22.1
A group of guys	28	30.8	15	15.8
One guy	5	5.5	10	10.5
One girlfriend	5	5.5		2.1
By self	8	8.8		12.6
	91		95	
	*3.3% missing data		*2.1% missing data	

Summary and Conclusion

Using a sample of lower class incarcerated and high school adolescent girls, it was found that "ideological liberation" is associated with greater delinquency in the case of white girls, but was not significantly correlated with extent of delinquent involvement for blacks.

For both the white and black subsamples, the strong associations between group measures and delinquent involvement suggest that it is not correct to conceive of female delinquency as some kind of personal maladaptation. Rather, it appeared that the peer group exerted a strong delinquent influence, similar to the associations found in previous studies of male friendship patterns. It was found that the most group support for engaging in delinquent activities came from other girlfriends, and that perceptions of approval from girlfriends was significantly correlated with actual delinquent involvement.

Several of the other items which concern the social context in which girls commit delinquent acts revealed the necessity to look at more than one kind of liberation, particularly when dealing with an adolescent sample. While the more delinquent white girls were more likely to answer in a liberated fashion in terms of an overall sex role ideology, and to be less likely to consider marriage all important, in other ways they appeared more traditional. They were more likely to make distinctions between how girls would react to their doing certain kinds of delinquent acts on the one hand, and how boyfriends and other males would react on the other. At the same time the more delinquent white girls were most likely to indicate that they went out in mixed groups, and that the males would be the ones who would "start the trouble." In contrast, it appeared that the black girls in this sample could be depicted as more "personally" liberated or at least independent. There was a greater congruence between their perceptions of what their male and female friends would think of them if they were to engage in certain delinquent acts; they were more likely to respond that girls could be the ones would might "start the trouble"; they are more likely to say they were with girls when actually engaging in delinquent acts.

Given the inherent limitations of using single item indicators, it nevertheless appears that while delinquency of the white girls is significantly associated with interaction with/approval from other girlfriends, it also appears to still be tied in some way to their association with male companions (at least in their own perceptions). More research is needed which analyzes how association with males influences girls' delinquent activity. It is not clear whether this represents (1) a case of the female playing the traditional accomplice or "subordinate" role,

(2) an attempt to imitate or be like the boys (as Miller (1973) suggested in his analysis of girl gangs), or (3) girls competing with boys for a piece of the action (as Adler might suggest). A fourth possibility is that as the white girls may have classically been more protected/constrained than blacks, with a relaxing of constraints on their behavior, increased opportunities to get out of the house, etc., they would be more likely to learn the (delinquent) ropes from boys who have had a more established tradition of delinquency; in contrast, the black girls may have an already established tradition of independence/freedom of action.

It is also important to develop further indices of sex-role traditionality/liberality, as it seems clear that this cannot be measured adequately along a single dimension. It is particularly important to examine such sex-role changes in ways that make sense for adolescent girls -- to include attention not only to ideological liberation but to actual behavioral independence as well.

LITERATURE CITED

Adler, Freda
1969 The Female Offender in Philadelphia. Ph.D. dissertation (unpublished) University Park: University of Pennsylvania.

Barker, Gordon H. and William T. Adams
1962 "Comparison of the Delinquencies of Boys and Girls." Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science 53:470-475.

Cohen, Albert K.
1955 Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang. New York: The Free Press.

Coleman, James S.
1961 The Adolescent Society. New York: The Free Press.

Cowie, J., J. Cowie, and Eliot Slater
1968 Delinquency in Girls, Cambridge: Humanities Press.

Faustini, Gino
1969 "La delinquenga fra le adolescenti in Italia." Experienge di Rieducagione 16 (1):71-112.

Flacks, R.
1967 "The Liberated Generation: An Exploration of the Roots of Student Protest." Journal of Social Issues 23:52-75.

Gilbert, June
1972 "Delinquent (Approved School) and Non-Delinquent (Secondary-Modern School) Girls." British Journal of Criminology (October):325-356.

Haan, M., B. Smith, and Jeanne Block
1968 "Moral Reasoning of Young Adults: Political-Social Behavior, Family Background, and Personality Correlates." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 10:183-201.

Heckell, Robert V. and Elizabeth Mandell
1970 Crime and Delinquency: A Study of Incarcerated Offenders in South Carolina. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Social Problems Research Institute.

Keniston, Kenneth
1969 "You Have to Grow Up in Scarsdale to Know How Bad Things Really Are." The New York Times Magazine (April 27).

Klein, Dorie
1973 "The Etiology of FEmale Crime: A Review of the Literature." Issues in Criminology 8,2 (Fall):3-30.

Konopka, Gisela
1966 The Adolescent Girl in Conflict. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Lerman, Paul
1967 "Gangs, Networks and Subcultural Delinquency." American Journal of Sociology 73 (July):63-72.

Mason, Karen Oppenheim and Larry L. Bumpass
1975 "U.S. Women's Sex-Role Ideology, 1970." American Journal of Sociology 80 (5):1212-1219.

McCollum, Sylvia G.
1975 "The Female Offender." Federal Probation (December):63-64.

Miller, Walter B.
1973 "The Molls." Society 11:32-35.

Morris, R. R.
1964 "Female Delinquency and Relational Problems." Social Forces 43 (October).

Newsweek
1975 "Now, The Violent Woman." (October 6):29.

Nye, F. Ivan and James F. Short, Jr.
1957 "Scaling Delinquent Behavior." American Sociological Review 22 (June):326-331.

Parsons, Talcott
1942 "Age and Sex in the Social Structure of the United States." American Sociological Review 7 (October).

Pollak, Otto and Alfred S. Friedman
1969 Family Dynamics and Female Sexual Delinquency. Palo Alto, Calif.: Science and Behavior Books.

Riege, Mary Gray
1972 "Parental Affection and Juvenile Delinquency in Girls." British Journal of Criminology (January):55-73.

Rittenhouse, Ruth
1963 "A Theory and Comparison of Male and Female Delinquency." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Sandhu, Harjit and Donald E. Allen
1969 "Female Delinquency: Goal Obstruction and Anomie." Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology 6,2 (May).

Slocum, Walter L. and Carol L. Stone
1963 "Family Culture Patterns and Delinquent-Type Behavior." Marriage and Family Living 25,2 (May):202-208.

Suttles, Gerald
1968 The Social Order of the Slum. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.